

CLAIMS

Having thus described the invention, what is claimed is:

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1. A personal care article, comprising:

- (a) a front portion having a front end, a second end, a first side edge, and a second side edge;
- (b) first lateral section and second lateral section, each of the first and second lateral sections having an inner portion releasably fastened to said front portion, and an outer portion attached to said front portion;
- (c) a back portion having a back end, a third side edge, and a fourth side edge; and
- (d) a crotch portion between said front portion and said back portion,

each of said outer portions of said first and second lateral sections being secured to one of said third and fourth side edges of said back portion to form a pant-like article having a waist opening, and first and second leg openings,

strength of attachment of said outer portions of said first and second lateral sections to said front portion being less than strength of the securement of said outer portions of said first and second lateral sections to said back portion, whereby attachment of said outer portions of said first and second lateral sections to said front portion can be separated from said front portion without separating the securement of said first and second lateral sections from the third and fourth side edges of said back portion.

2. A personal care article as in Claim 1, said outer portions of said first and second lateral sections each having a respective outer edge extending outwardly

of the respective first and second side edges of said front portion whereby said first and second lateral sections are directly secured to respective ones of said third and fourth side edges of said back portion, without intervening material between said lateral sections and said back portion.

sub 315 3. A personal care article as in Claim 1, including an absorbent core attached to at least one of said front portion, said back portion, and said crotch portion.

4. A personal care article as in Claim 1 wherein the attachment of the outer portions of the lateral sections to the front portion comprises employment of at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, thermally activated bonds, hook and loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, and piercing.

5. A personal care article as in Claim 1 wherein said first and second lateral sections generally overlie said front portion.

6. A personal care article as in Claim 1 wherein each of said first and second lateral sections has an inner edge, said inner edges being aligned in an abutting relationship, each with respect to the other.

sub 27 7. A personal care article as in Claim 6 wherein the inner edges are joined together by line of weakness.

8. A personal care article, comprising:

- (a) a front portion having a front end, a second end, a first side edge, and a second side edge;

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- (b) first lateral section and second lateral section, each of the first and second lateral sections having an inner portion releasably fastened to said front portion, and an outer portion attached at one or more attachment sites to said front portion;
- (c) a back portion having a back end, a third side edge and a fourth side edge; and
- (d) a crotch portion between said front portion and said back portion,

each of said outer portions of said first and second lateral sections being positioned on said front portion for direct securement to one of said third and fourth side edges of said back portion to form a pant-like article having a waist opening, and first and second leg openings,

strength of attachment, at said attachment site, of said outer portions of said first and second lateral sections to said front portion being sufficiently weak that such attachments can be separated from said front portion without substantially fracturing said front portion.

Sub 311 9. A personal care article as in Claim 8, said outer portions of said first and second lateral sections each having a respective outer edge extending outwardly of the respective first and second side edges of said front portion whereby said first and second lateral sections are directly secured to respective ones of said third and fourth side edges of said back portion, without intervening material between said lateral sections and said back portion.

10. A personal care article as in Claim 8, including an absorbent core attached to at least one of said front portion, said back portion, and said crotch portion.

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11. A personal care article as in Claim 8 wherein the attachment at the attachment sites between the outer portions of the lateral sections and the front portion comprises employment of at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, hook and loop fastening, and thermally activated bonding.

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12. A personal care article as in Claim 8 wherein said first and second lateral sections generally overlie said front portion.

13. A personal care article as in Claim 8 wherein each of said first and second lateral sections has an inner edge, said inner edges being aligned in an abutting relationship, each with respect to the other.

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14. A personal care article as in Claim 13 wherein said inner edges are joined together by line of weakness.

15. A method of assembling a pant-like personal care article having a front portion defining a front end, a second end, a first side edge, and a second side edge, a back portion having a back end, a third side edge and a fourth side edge, and a crotch portion between the front portion and the back portion, the method comprising:

- (a) releasably fastening inner portions of first and second lateral sections to the front portion;
- (b) attaching outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion adjacent the respective first and second side edges of the front portion; and
- (c) securing the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the third and fourth side edges of the back portion, with strength of securement greater than strength of attachment of the outer portions of

the first and second lateral sections to the front portion, to form the pant-like article, having a waist opening and first and second leg openings.

the attachments of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion being such that the outer portions of the lateral sections can be separated from the front portion without separating the securement of the first and second lateral sections from the third and fourth side edges of the back portion.

16. A method as in Claim 15 including attaching the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion adjacent the respective first and second side edges of the front portion before attaching the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the back portion.

17. A method as in Claim 15, including attaching the outer portions of the lateral sections to the front portion by employing at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, hook and loop fastening, and thermally activated bonding.

18. A method as in Claim 15, including attaching the outer portions of the lateral sections to the front portion with sufficiently weak attachments whereby such attachments can be separated from the front portion without substantially fracturing the front portion.

19. A method of using a pant-like personal care article having a waist opening and first and second leg openings, the personal care article having a front portion defining a front end, a second end, a first side edge, and a second side edge, a back portion having a back end, a third side edge, and a fourth side edge, and a crotch portion between the front portion and the back portion, inner portions of first and second lateral sections being releasably fastened to the front portion, outer portions

of the first and second lateral sections being secured to the back portion, the method comprising:

- (a) attaching the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion adjacent the respective first and second side edges of the front portion with strength of attachment less than strength of securement of the outer portions of the lateral sections to the back portion; and
- (b) separating the outer portion of at least one of the first and second lateral sections from attachment to the front portion adjacent the respective one of the first and second side edges without separating the respective outer portion of the respective lateral section from the respective securement to the back portion.

20. A method as in Claim 19, including attaching the outer portions of the lateral sections to the front portion by employing at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, hook and loop fastening, and thermally activated bonding.